

BOOK REVIEWS

ESSENTIALS OF RESPIRATORY DISEASE. R. B. Cole, M.A., M.D.(Contab.), M.R.C.P.(Lond.), (Pp. x+278; Illustrated. £2.75). London: Pitman Medical, 1971.

WHEN I was a student I never bought a textbook of medicine. I cannot remember that I formulated any policy or that I thought the matter out in any way but I had a definite feeling that the big books were not for me. Had I not seen a statement by a reviewer 'The new edition of X's Textbook of Medicine has grown in girth but not in stature'? Well actually I had not. That brilliantly succinct and damning comment did not appear until years later

But I did find it worthwhile and so did many of my colleagues to buy smaller and more specialised books. I remember very dearly Thomas Lewis' book on hearts, Walshe's on nervous diseases and Coope's on chests. That was the order of merit too, for Coope's did not have the perspective and wisdom of the other two.

The student of today is now better served that I was on chests, for Dr. Cole's book is excellent. It is short, well written and sensible. Part 1 on clinical methods includes a splendid chapter on how to examine chest radiographs. Part 2 is a concise but remarkably full account of modern concepts of pulmonary physiology and includes a run down of the uses and limitations of spirometry, arterial blood gas analysis and other respiratory function tests. Part 3 describes the common varieties of lung disease. Acute infection, asthma, chronic bronchitis and malignant disease quite correctly dominate this section, but it includes useful sections on industrial lung disease, pulmonary thromboembolism, collagen diseases of the lung and diffuse pulmonary fibrosis.

This is a book which all students and most doctors must buy. Do not borrow it. Buy it because Dr. Cole's approach to disease is so right. It is the approach of an experienced scientifically based physician who has thought deeply about his subject.

This book, written by a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Medicine at Queen's, will be widely acclaimed. It will bring credit not only to Dr. Cole and to the Department, but to the Medical School and the teaching hospitals of Belfast. O.L.W.

PERSONALITY AND SCIENCE. An Interdisciplinary Discussion. Edited by I. T. Ramsay and Ruth Porter (Pp. ix+158. £1.00 paper; £2.25 boards). Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone, 1971.

THIS is a report of a series of meetings supported by the Ciba Foundation in which the broader area where recent developments in medical science raise moral issues directly related to the status and development of human personality were discussed by a group of medical scientists, philosophers, legal experts and theologians. As with most problems in which one endeavours to reach the ultimate truth it soon becomes apparent that even definitive definitions of many of the subjects discussed are extremely difficult to arrive at, so that final judgements are premature if not impossible. Still the problems raised are forcing themselves upon the medical profession and sooner or later, though the philosophic content of such problems may still be open to debate, the profession must find a consensus of opinion that will support the current practice of the times. It is a debate that is only beginning, and for the solution of these problems the medical profession may well have to seek the help of scholars in many other fields, and indeed to consider the reaction of the public as a whole. It is interesting to read one important conclusion. "All the members of the group, medical and non-medical, were in strong agreement that if the patient's personal doctor ceased to support him—the whole ethic of the profession, intact since Hippocrates, would be radically and